

We celebrate our heroes, our athletes, our innovations, because no matter our nationality, race, or gender, we celebrate that which is the best of us, because we can see ourselves as a part of that greatness. Each of us, no matter how remote, contributes to our individual success, our combined greatness, and our unique capacity to envision a better world, simply because we are here. The Internet is the single greatest technology the world has seen in years. In some respects, it parallels if not eclipses the record setting moon landings of the 60s that brought an entire generation of people all over the world together.

It is the greatest educational system ever developed. It has expanded people's perceptions of each other all over the world, in positive, humanistic terms. The availability of information in this free-flowing medium, are unparalleled in modern and contemporary society, in history. The Internet represents all that is great in man's ability to envision. We all celebrate it, every time we access it. We have seen television and cable television with all their potential and promise be reduced to the lowest form of communication. This has occurred by exactly the standards that will be set by the same corporations who now also seek to take over, control and manipulate the Internet. It is a perspective that confuses the stewardship of a medium they didn't develop, and have not shaped, as one of ownership, as theirs to take, when in fact the resource was sponsored with public funds. They were given public money, and now they want to pretend they were not, and that it is theirs because the infrastructure they were paid to develop, by us, is theirs. In fact, it isn't. We share in its ownership, and they wish to deny this fact.

This resource that the Internet is, they were given as a gift as all of us have been. It was already sponsored and developed by public funds, and to make it available through that existing infrastructure, which was theirs, and which they agreed to. It's as if now they're reneging on the deal, and holding the property of the people, hostage. It is not theirs. They do not own it. They do not have the right to take it.

Unfortunately, this greed is the result of personalities that do not honor anything but their own greed, power, need to have material property, need to have control.

The internet is already, and can go on to be, an honorable and well intentioned prosperous medium unlike anything the world has ever seen before, and that we all now take for granted.

But for a few selfish and shortsighted personalities attempting to enrich themselves, it will be a wrong comparable to wartime profiteering if these individuals are given the kind of control they desire. And we are in a time of escalating violence that the free flow of information contributes to dampening, by information and knowledge, by educating, by showing each other in all our beauty and realness. It destabilizes the ability of some to distort that we are all just people loving each other, caring about each other, willing to help and support each other, and it is therefore unlike any treasure the world has ever seen. It is our responsibility to protect this treasure.

The world needs intelligence, not greater dumbing down, and these are the very corporations, the very personalities, the same neurotic personality structures already responsible for the dumbing down of America and the world as a whole. That they lack awareness, that they lack greater intelligence, that they disrespect that which deserves our regard and care, our capacity to envision, is tragic in its

vast implications and consequences for us all, the entire world, our world.

This rich, vast medium should not be bestowed to them no matter the arguments.

The argument is, the phone and cable companies distribute the Internet on their system, and therefore they have a right to profit from it. The point is, they already do. They already do to the point of record profits, every year. They have enriched themselves, and continue to, and they simply want more, and more, and more.

If this is about infrastructure, with the profits they have made, and the exponential raising yearly cost to the consumer, we would have an unparalleled infrastructure already, and we do not. We aren't even comparably close to other countries, and this is the great United States of America. It's a falsity to say the infrastructure is, or will be improved by these companies who like Wall Street, have violated the country, violated the world, and who have no remorse, no sense of responsibility, no sense of accountability. These collections of these personalities are what have already devastated the world economy, and if left to their own devices will surely go on to do greater and greater damage.

The Internet is in many respects a gift that can retrieve what the world has lost, and that it has regained, exhibited in the collective experience the Internet has brought to us all.

This argument is not unique to the Internet remaining open and free. It is the same problem throughout the world. The banks, the insurance companies, the health care system, etc., are all experiencing the same degradation by personalities who do not see the bigger picture, and who should be ashamed, but aren't. In fact, they are shamelessly greedy and self-centered, the unfortunate product of a cultural neurosis. It's a sickness.

The point is, federal and local funds, public monies, were spent capitalizing these very corporations to carry Internet connectivity. The public profits from these funds, by having free and open access to the Internet.

These companies, Verizon, AT&T, Comcast, etc., are paving the way for hundreds, thousands, of these personalities to follow suit. Before long, if they are given this power, if the FCC cannot contain them, the one Federal office that can make this difference, what has been a great gift to the world, will be reduced to a dysfunctional system of misinformation, manipulative advertisements, and meaningless programming. It will happen fast, or slow, incrementally devastating what we have become accustomed to, free and open access to whatever information we seek, truly a democratic principle.

The Internet is a democracy at its foundation, and this is all at risk, has the potential to become something other than what we now know it as, that will be a devastating loss that isn't worth the risk, even if these personalities aren't capable of seeing past their individual short term gain.

I agree that the Internet is a public platform for free speech, equal opportunity, economic growth and innovation. Without vital Net Neutrality protections, companies like Verizon and Comcast, which have a commercial incentive to limit the free-flowing Web, can wreck it all, and they surely will the examples precede them.

These companies should not have the power to determine the fate of the Internet.

Collin Shutz

Seattle, WA

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